

MS DAILY BRIEF - 30 August 2022

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Prince of Wales aircraft carrier to receive F-35B fighter jets in first US combat simulation

The second of the Royal Navy's two aircraft carriers, HMS Prince of Wales, departed Portsmouth on Saturday to begin a benchmark run in the United States.

HMS Prince of Wales will cross the Atlantic with her task group before starting aircraft trials on the US east coast.

The 65,000-tonne warship will take part in the exercises alongside the frigate HMS Richmond, the RFA tanker Tideforce and a group of helicopters and drones, before F-35B fighter jets join in once the ship arrives in North America for the Westlant 22 deployment.

Along with stops in ports in New York, Halifax in Canada and the Caribbean, the next three months will see the Prince of Wales task group working closely with US allies, operating F-35B aircraft and unmanned systems.

With the fleet flagship HMS Queen Elizabeth also arriving in the Mediterranean and Baltic this autumn, at the heart of a strong Royal Navy task group, this will mean that both UK aircraft carriers will be operating F-35B aircraft thousands of miles away.

Last year saw the inauguration of the first aircraft carrier in a series of seven called HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Source: <https://newsweek.ro/international/video-portavionul-prince-of-wales-va-primi-avioane-de-lupta-f-35b-in-prima-simulare-de-lupta-in-sua>

USS Preble is the first US Navy destroyer equipped with a HELIOS laser

WarZone magazine this time gives us not a trip into the past, but news from the present. At least Joseph Trevithick's article appeared on August 23, 2022. And this is what I write there.

The USS Arleigh Burke-class destroyer USS Preble has received a high-energy laser with integrated surveillance and monitoring system (HELIOS) in service. It is the first of the ships to be equipped with HELIOS, which is a 60-kilowatt "laser directed energy weapon" and also the first to have such a weapon integrated with the Aegis combat system.

The destroyer joins a small but growing number of marine vessels equipped with various types of directed energy weapons.

Lockheed Martin, the prime contractor for HELIOS, issued a press release last week announcing the installation of the system aboard the Preble, but photos on the ship's official Facebook page show that the laser had been installed weeks earlier.

In March, the company said it had completed ground testing of the system at Wallops Island, Virginia, and the entire structure is now being shipped to the USS Preble's home port of San Diego for installation directly on the destroyer.

"Lockheed Martin and the U.S. Navy share a common vision and enthusiasm for the development and delivery of laser weapon systems." Rick Cordaro, vice president of Lockheed Martin Advanced Product Solutions, said on Aug. 18.

"HELIOS enhances the overall effectiveness of the ship's combat system to deter future threats and provide additional protection, and we understand that we need to provide appropriate solutions tailored to the Navy's priorities."

Lockheed Martin received its first contract from the Navy to work on HELIOS in 2018, but in reality, the system has a much longer history of directed energy weapons research and development.

The laser is mounted forward of the ship's main superstructure on a modified platform, which was originally designed to house a 20mm Vulcan Mk 15 Phalanx Close-In Weapon System (CIWS) close-range defense gun. USS Preble is the first US Navy destroyer equipped with a HELIOS laser.

Arleigh Burke Flight IIA second-series destroyers like Preble have never had such a gun installed in this location, although it is located aft of the superstructure. The HELIOS, as

the name suggests, is a multi-purpose system. It is powerful enough to damage or destroy some targets, such as small drones and boats. As such, it provides a limited replacement for CIWS weapons and offers protection against targets that, when deployed in groups, could pose a threat to ships like Preble.

The system can also act as a "dazzler" by blinding or confusing optical sensors on enemy ships and aircraft, as well as those searching for missiles and other munitions. When used in this way, HELIOS has the potential to deflect incoming weapons or limit the enemy's overall situational awareness and surveillance capabilities.

In addition, HELIOS has its own optical sensors, whose primary task is to detect and track a target and direct a laser at it, but can also be used simply as second-order surveillance systems (it's not entirely clear what this is).

In destroyers like Arleigh Burke and others equipped with the Aegis system, the HELIOS laser promises to be even more effective. Rich Calabrese, director of Surface Navy Mission Systems at Lockheed Martin, during a wide-ranging interview with Tyler Rogoway for The WarZone magazine last year, had this to say about HELIOS and Aegis: "We're constantly improving the integration capabilities of the Aegis system and are working to introduce new weapons and sensors and try to coordinate kinetic strike and soft annihilation.

In terms of directed energy weapons... Indeed, we are already integrating HELIOS into the Aegis system in our New Jersey lab. The guy who now runs the laser program told me the other day that we recently fired a laser under the control of the Aegis Weapon System computer program. Lockheed Martin has already secured a contract to provide at least one more HELIOS system to the Navy for installation on another Arleigh Burke-class destroyer. HELIOS is designed with future growth in mind and there has already been talk of increasing the maximum laser power to 150 kilowatts.

The Navy said HELIOS is just one part of its directed-energy weapons ambition, which will eventually include high-power microwave systems. In the past, this particular system has been described as the first part for the larger Surface Navy Laser program.

The 150-kilowatt laser opens up opportunities to hit larger and more complex targets, including cruise missiles and low-flying aircraft, as well as artillery missiles (don't know about us, but that's what the Americans call the missiles launched by MLRS systems.).

Earlier this year, the Navy, in collaboration with Lockheed Martin, demonstrated the ability of a solid-state laser energy weapon to successfully shoot down an unmanned target acting as a counterpart to a subsonic cruise missile.

This test, which was conducted at White Sands Missile Range, New Mexico, used a laser weapon called the Laser Layered Defense (LLD) system.

HELIOS sea trials on the Prebl destroyer will begin in fiscal year 2023, which starts October 1, 2022. It is not yet clear when the destroyer with the new system will be officially recognized as combat ready.

Source: <https://topwar.ru/200829-uss-preble-pervyj-jesminec-vms-ssha-osnaschennyj-lazerom-helios.html>

Russian warships have arrived in the Adriatic Sea. What one of them tried to do is incredible.

The Russians are taking small but sure steps forward for them and their heinous plans. From the method of advance, according to military analysts, it is obvious that they do not want to stop on land and want to continue their expansion at sea.

Russian warships have reached the Adriatic Sea. What one of them tried to do is incredible. Video

It happened at the end of July, but only now has the information reached the media. Russian Navy warships arrived in the Adriatic Sea during the period in question, where they reportedly tried to block the exit of the US aircraft carrier "Harry Truman".

The Russian ships reached Ancona at that time.

How it happened

At one point there was talk of a shipping congestion in the Adriatic Sea. The explanation has only now been made public. Specifically, Russian warships entered the Adriatic Sea and would have reached along the Italian coast as far as Ancona, as revealed by Admiral Giuseppe Cavo Dragone, the head of Italy's Supreme Defence Staff, in an interview with La Repubblica newspaper.

On 22 July, Russian ships blocked the entry-exit route in the Adriatic Sea with the specific aim of preventing the US aircraft carrier "Harry Truman" from moving. This led to a huge increase in tensions and a series of manoeuvres by NATO and Russian ships in the area.

Thus, the Russian cruiser, according to military specifiers, came within a hundred kilometres of the US-flagged ship.

At the end of July, the Russian cruiser "Varyag" was less than 100 km from the US cruiser "Forrest Sherman", the Italian press wrote.

Chessboard move

The ships were on either side of Cape Santa Maria di Leuca, the Russian ship on the Adriatic side and the American ship on the Ionian side, according to the media. A little further south was the aircraft carrier "Harry Truman" with its American escort.

Seeing the given situation from the territory, immediately, the American aircraft carrier was flanked all around by NATO ships from Turkey, Greece, Italy, Spain and the US.

All these ships, on 25 July, formed a square around the aircraft carrier in potential danger. A move just like at the chessboard when you want to defend your "queen".

Subsequently, Index representatives sent a request to the Ministry of Defence to find out if the activities of Russian and NATO ships in the Black Sea are known.

"...MHR Command is aware of the presence of Russian Federation ships in the Adriatic Sea. As no ships were observed entering the territorial sea of the Republic of Croatia, there was no reason to react," the response of the Ministry of Defence created for Index reads.

Source: www.infoactual.ro

Russia and China, joint military exercises in the Sea of Japan

Russian and Chinese military sailors will devise joint actions to defend sea lanes in the Sea of Japan during the strategic command and staff exercise (SKSHU) Vostok-2022, the Russian Defense Ministry reports, Interfax writes.

"In the waters of the Sea of Japan, joint practical actions to defend sea lanes and areas of maritime economic activity in order to assist land forces in the coastal direction will be developed by the Pacific Fleet and PRC naval force groups," a statement said.

The "Vostok-2022" manoeuvres will take place from 1 to 7 September under the leadership of Russian Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov at seven training grounds in the Eastern Military District, as well as in the waters and coastal areas of the Sea of Ohotsk and the Sea of Japan.

Source: https://www.dcnews.ro/rusia-si-china-exercitii-militare-comune-in-marea-japoniei_885099.html

India must play a key role in annihilating China's intentions at sea

US Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Mike Gilday said on 27 August that India will be a key partner for America in the future, playing a key role in countering China. Addressing a seminar -- hosted by the Heritage Foundation in Washington -- Gilday said India presents China with a problem on two fronts, Nikkei Asia reported. "It is now forcing China to not only look eastward to the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, but now it has to look over its shoulder at India," he said. "I have spent more time on a trip to India than I have spent with any other country because I see them as a strategic partner for us in the future," he added. Referring to his five-day visit to India last October, he said, "The Indian Ocean battlespace is becoming increasingly important to us. The fact that India and China currently have a small skirmish along their border... is strategically important. ." He expressed concern that the India-China border clashes in the Himalayas are a two-pronged problem for Beijing and have gained action. Earlier in June, former Pentagon official Elbridge Colby -- during the Quad (US, Japan, India and Australia) meeting in Japan -- said that while India would not directly contribute to a local battle over Taiwan, it could draw China's attention to the Himalayan border, the report added. "What India needs the US and Japan to do is to be as strong as possible in South Asia and effectively draw China's attention so that it has a major problem on the second front," Colby said. In the meantime, India benefits equally from China's difficulties in dealing with a strong US-Japan alliance over Taiwan, he said.

Source: <https://www.livemint.com/news/world/india-to-play-a-key-role-in-countering-china-says-us-navy-chief-11661599675347.html>

Iran conducted an anti-ship missile test in the Strait of Hormuz during naval manoeuvres last week

"Iran conducted a test of a short-range anti-ship missile in the Strait of Hormuz during last week's naval maneuvers, which Washington believes were meant to send a message in the context of the reimposition of sanctions against Tehran," a US official was quoted by Reuters as saying on Friday, according to Agerpres.

The official cited did not suggest, however, that such a missile test was unusual during naval exercises or that it was conducted under unsafe conditions, noting that it occurred in Iranian territorial waters of the Strait.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards confirmed on Sunday that they had held military exercises in the bay in recent days, saying they were aimed at "confronting possible threats" from enemies.

US General Joseph Votel, head of the US military's Central Command, said earlier this week that the scale of the naval exercises was similar to those carried out in the past by Iran. But the timing of the set of exercises was meant to get Washington's attention.

"It's pretty clear to us that they were trying to use this exercise to send us a message that as we get closer to the sanctions period, they have certain capabilities," Votel told reporters.

Iran has been furious over US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from an international agreement on Iran's nuclear programme and impose sanctions on Tehran again, Reuters notes.

Senior Iranian officials have warned that the country will not take lightly to a new US campaign to choke off Iran's vital oil exports.

Last month, Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei backed President Hassan Rouhani's suggestion that Iran could block Gulf oil exports if its own exports are halted.

"The US military is fully aware of Iran's military activities." "We are aware of what is happening and remain prepared to protect ourselves as we pursue our goals of freedom of navigation and freedom to trade in international waters," Votel said.

Source: <https://blacknews.ro/iranul-a-efectuat-un-test-cu-o-racheta-anti-nava-in-stramtoarea-ormuz-in-timpul-manevrelor-navale-de-saptamana-trecuta/>

Ukrainian army to receive underwater drones for demining Black Sea coastline

The United Kingdom announced Saturday that it will donate six underwater drones to Ukraine to help it neutralise Russian mines off its coast and train soldiers to operate them, AFP and DPA report. The "lightweight, autonomous devices are designed for use in shallow coastal areas and are capable of operating up to 100 metres below sea level to detect, locate and identify mines so that the Ukrainian navy can neutralise them," the UK Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

"Dozens of members of the Ukrainian navy will be trained to operate these drones over the coming months, with training already starting for the first of them," the ministry said. The training will be provided by British and American specialists on British soil, according to DPA.

This new military aid comes at a time when, according to the British Ministry of Defence, "Russia is turning food into weapons, destroying Ukrainian agriculture and imposing a blockade of Ukrainian Black Sea ports to prevent its exports".

While a number of ships carrying grain have been able to leave Ukraine under a UN-brokered agreement, these operations "remain limited by submarine mines left by Russian forces along the coast" of Ukraine, the UK said. UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace said Moscow's "cynical attempts to ransom the world's food supply" must not be allowed to succeed.

In May, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a £300m (€355m) tranche of military and humanitarian aid for Ukraine, following a previous plan for £450m, including the supply of missiles.

Source: www.tomisnews.ro

Ukraine allows its seafarers to join foreign ships

All Ukrainian men aged between 18 and 60 were subject to a travel ban during February's war, but some seafarers will soon have an exemption. On 27 August 2022, Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers finally adopted a resolution on allowing Ukrainian seafarers to leave the country to work under contracts on ships. Our company, SKYMAR, is a leading provider of travel services in Ukraine for shipowners and seafarers. In the difficult days of March 2022, when all players in the maritime market and relevant organizations refused to deal with the issue of departure of Ukrainian seafarers, SKYMAR started to pursue a positive solution by all possible official and behind-the-scenes methods. Every week, we wrote letters to the President of Ukraine, the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Office of the President of Ukraine. We wrote text messages, called all known numbers and tried to demonstrate and show how important it is that Ukrainian seafarers return to their jobs and release their colleagues who were on ships at the time the war started. Our petition to the President of Ukraine managed to collect 25,000 signatures and get his attention. Ukrainian seafarers bring up to \$4 billion into the country every year. Ukraine ranks sixth in the world in terms of the number of seafarers employed. The urgent need to lift restrictions on Ukrainian seafarers was due to the fact that most seafarers could be left without a livelihood. Their skills and abilities are very specific and have little use ashore, even in wartime. In addition, a large proportion of Ukrainian seafarers help our army in the fight against the enemy, both financially and with humanitarian aid. And on Saturday it happened! We welcome this decision by the Ukrainian government. Now Ukrainian seafarers will once again be able to

travel to work on ships around the world, relieve their colleagues, start caring for their families again, and continue to support Ukraine's military. This is a victory for seafarers and their families, and there are about one million of them in Ukraine. In the coming days, the Cabinet of Ministers will approve the final adjustments to the adopted resolution and approve the deadline from which Ukrainian seafarers will be able to leave with contracts. Our company continues to participate in the working group discussions for details on the departure of seafarers. Once again we would like to thank every Ukrainian seafarer and every member of their family for achieving our common goal. Together we are stronger!

Source: <https://www.maritime-executive.com/editorials/ukraine-s-government-allows-its-seafarers-to-rejoin-foreign-ships> and <https://www.marinelink.com/news/ukraine-allows-sailors-leave-country-499054>

Ships lost, damaged or confiscated during the Russian invasion of Ukraine (part 3)

It has been six months since Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine. I have tried to keep a list of the damage and losses to ships since the invasion began.

The list below is the list of ships that have been damaged, sunk or seized since 24 February 2022.

We welcome any additions, changes or corrections.

Date Type of vessel Country Event and location Losses

24.02.2022 Yasa Jupiter Civilian merchant vessel Marshall Island Damage due to air attack, off the coast of Odessa No loss

25.02.2022 Millennial Spirit Civilian merchant ship Moldova Damage from artillery fire by Russian warships at 12 nm off port of Yuzny 2 casualties

26.02.2022 Namura Queen Civilian merchant ship Panama Damage due to air attack, location unknown 1 injured

26.02.2022 Sapfir Civilian merchant ship Ukraine Hijacked by Russians on Snake Island No casualties

1.03.2022 Anonymous Raptor class patrol boat Russia Allegedly hit by Ukrainian armed forces, no evidence in Sea of Azov Unknown

1.03.2022 Patrol boat of the Anonim Raptor class Russia Allegedly hit by Ukrainian armed forces, no evidence in the Sea of Azov Unknown

3.03.2022 Banglar Samriddhi Civilian merchant ship Ukrainian air raid near Yuzny Unknown

3.03.2022 Slovyansk Island Bangladesh patrol boat Damage from missile hit near Olvia port 1 dead

4.03.2022 Helt Civilian merchant ship Panama Allegedly hit by a mine off the coast of Odessa No casualties

4.03.2022 Frigate 3rd class hatman Sahaydachniy Krivak Ukraine Sunk at landing by her own crew from Mykolaiv No casualties

14.03.2022 Akkerman Gurza-M class patrol vessel Ukraine Hijacked by Russians in Berdiansk port No loss

14.03.2022 Arabat Zhuk-class coast guard ship Ukraine Hijacked by Russians in Berdiansk port No loss

14.03.2022 BG-108 Zhuk-class coastguard ship Ukraine Russian hijacking in Berdiansk port No loss

14.03.2022 Coast guard ship BG-14 UMS 1000 class Ukraine Hijacked by the Russians in the port of Berdiansk No loss

14.03.2022 Coast guard ship BG-24 UMS 1200 class Ukraine Hijacked by Russians in port of Berdiansk No loss

14.03.2022 BG-308 Kalkan class coast guard vessel Ukraine Russian hijacking in Berdiansk port No loss

14.03.2022 Kalkan-class coastguard vessel BG-310 Ukraine Seized by Russians in the port of Berdiansk No loss

14.03.2022 BG-311 Kalkan-class coastguard vessel Ukraine Russian hijacking in Berdiansk port No loss

14.03.2022 Tugboat Korets Sorum class Ukraine Hijacked by the Russians in the port of Berdiansk No loss

14.03.2022 Vyshhorod-class patrol vessel Gurza-M Ukraine Russian hijacking in the port of Berdiansk No loss

21.03.2022 Raptor boat Raptor-class patrol boat Russia Hit by anti-tank missile in Sea of Azov, towed back Unknown

24.03.2022 Novocherkassk Ropucha LST class Russia Explosion and fire; sunk in Berdiansk port Unknown

24.03.2022 Ruşen Mete Civilian merchant ship Russia Damage by explosion and fire in Berdiansk port 8 injured

24.03.2022 Saratov Class Aligator LST Russia Damage by explosion and fire in Berdiansk port 3 dead, 2 injured

24.03.2022 Tsezar Kunikov Ropucha class LST Sierra Leone Fire damage from explosion in Berdiansk port Unknown

30.03.2022 Project Preyaslav 1824B intelligence ship Ukraine Ukrainian intelligence ship hit by Russian special forces and artillery in Dnyeper River Unknown

5.04.2022 Azburg Dominican Republic civilian merchant ship hit by Russian artillery in Mariupol port, sunk. 1 injured

6.04.2022 Repair ship Donbas Amur class Ukraine Hit by Russian artillery in Mariupol port. Unknown

9.04.2022 Apache Civilian merchant ship Malta Hit by Ukrainian artillery in Mariupol port. No casualties

10.04.2022 Kremenchuk class patrol vessel Gurza-M Ukraine Hijacked by Russians in Mariupol port No casualties

11.04.2022 Smata Civilian merchant ship Liberia Hijacked by Russians in Mariupol port No loss

13.04.2022 Coast guard vessel BG-22 UMS 1200 class Ukraine Sunk in Mariupol port Unknown

13.04.2022 Coast guard ship BG-23 UMS 1200 class Ukraine Sunk in Mariupol port Unknown

13.04.2022 Coast guard ship Donbas-class Tarantul Ukraine Sunk in port of Mariupol Unknown

13.04.2022 Moscow cruiser Slava class Russia Hit by anti-ship missiles, burned and sunk under tow At least 39

15.04.2022 Lubnia Gurza-M class patrol boat Ukraine Sunk in Mariupol harbour Unknown

15.04.2022 Meotida Damen TSHD 750 Ukraine Sunk in Mariupol port Unknown

18.04.2022 Tzarevna Civilian merchant vessel Malta hit by artillery in Mariupol port Unknown

2.05.2022 Bot Raptor Raptor class patrol boat Russia Struck by MA

4.05.2022 Project Serna LCM 11770 LCM Russia Hit by MAM-L missile fired from TB-2 near Snake Island Unknown

4.05.2022 Raptor boat Raptor-class patrol boat Russia Hit by MAM-L missile fired from TB-2 near Snake Island Unknown

4.05.2022 Raptor Bot Raptor-class patrol boat Russia Hit by MAM-L missile fired from TB-2 near Snake Island Unknown

1.06.2022 Brentix Tanzania civilian merchant ship hit by artillery in port of Ochakov Unknown

4.06.2022 Vinnytsia Grisha class corvette Ukraine Sunk/sunk in Ochakov harbour. Not in use since January 2021. Unknown

17.06.2022 Project Spasatel Vasily Bekh 22870 tugboat Russia Hit by two anti-ship missiles 10 dead, 23 injured

29.06.2022 D-106 Project 1176 LCM Russia Hit a mine off the coast of Mariupol and sank Unknown

6.07.2022 Millennial Spirit Civilian merchant ship Moldova Hit again by Russian missiles while floating abandoned No casualties

Source: <https://turkishnavy.net/>

New shipping route from Ukrainian ports announced to shorten transit time for humanitarian goods

The Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) has announced a new route for merchant vessels entering and leaving the three Ukrainian ports of Odessa, Chornomorsk, Pivdennyi/Yuzhny under the Black Sea Grain Initiative. The route comes into effect from 26 August. The new route is 320 nautical miles long and connects the three Ukrainian ports with inspection areas in Turkish territorial waters.

The humanitarian sea corridor, which is part of this route, stretches from the Ukrainian territorial sea border to a southern crossing point.

Grain from the Black Sea

This route has been adjusted after the first three weeks of operations. It allows shorter transit through the humanitarian sea corridor and easier planning for the shipping industry. The route stipulates that, while transiting the Humanitarian Maritime Corridor, no military vessel, aircraft or unmanned aerial vehicle may approach within 10 nautical miles of any ship engaged in the Initiative and transiting the corridor.

The new coordinates have been disseminated via the NAVTEX international navigation system.

JCC procedures state that any merchant vessel encountering challenges or threats while transiting the corridor must immediately report to the JCC.

Source: <https://www.marineinsight.com/shipping-news/new-shipping-route-from-ukrainian-ports-to-shorten-humanitarian-cargo-transit-time/>

Collaboration with French companies - high security risk for the Romanian Army

MBDA Missile Systems - target of a hacker attack and the subject of a NATO investigation into a possible leak. MBDA is supposed to supply missiles for the corvettes to be built by Naval Group for the Romanian Naval Forces.

The French company MBDA Missile Systems has apparently fallen victim to Russian hackers, according to reports published by the BBC, which quotes NATO officials. At first glance, the news itself might not be considered important by the citizens of our country, who are unaware that the company is the one that should deliver the missiles that will be placed on the four corvettes destined for the Romanian Naval Forces, if the Naval Group - Constanta

Naval Shipyard partnership finally signs the contract drawn up by the Ministry of National Defence in September.

The fact that MBDA Missile Systems is, among other companies, the subject of a NATO analysis of the impact of a data breach of classified military documents sold online by a group of Russian hackers, data that includes plans of weapons used by allies in the conflict in Ukraine, shows that the French company or one of its suppliers has major cyber vulnerabilities, which could also have an impact on the Romanian Naval Force's equipment in the future, if Naval Group will build the corvettes according to the obligations assumed in the bid submitted in the public procurement organised by the Ministry of National Defence in 2018-2019.

Missiles stuck in operation during the conflict in Syria

Note that this is not the first scandal in which the name of the French company that produces missiles for military ships appears. As BURSA newspaper pointed out one of the most recent incidents was in the spring of 2018, when France, along with the UK and the US, bombed Syria, but several MBDA-built missiles on three multirole naval frigates failed to fire. The French authorities said at the time that the fault lay not with MBDA but with Thales, whose software had allegedly suffered a series of errors during the military operation.

The military operation on the night of 13-14 April 2018 was aimed at "punishing" Bashar al-Assad after the chemical attack committed a week earlier, on 7 April, in Douma. As part of it, three French multirole frigates (FREMM) deployed in the Mediterranean and equipped for the first time with naval cruise missiles (MdcN, with a range of 1000 kilometres) built by MBDA Missile Systems, were supposed to hit several targets in the Syrian town of Homs. Unfortunately, only one of the three naval vessels managed to launch three of the eight missiles planned to reach the shore, but French officials at the time, including Florence Parly, former defence minister, said it was just a software error and ruled out from the outset any hypothesis that the Russians - allies of the Damascus regime who had a group of submarines in the area - had blocked the launch of the MBDA-built missiles.

In reality, things are not as the French authorities have tried to cover them up. The media in France has repeatedly reported that the Russian Federation was interested in acquiring four Mistral vessels before the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and that the Russians benefited from technology transfer during the course of the contract with the French DCSN, a division of the Naval Group. Moreover, the Russian side wanted to install on these ships the Naval Tactical Information Operation System (SENIT) - which is a computer data processing system developed by the French Navy - and the Force Command Information System (SICF), which is a command support system at the level of the major states (corps, division, brigade), very important for the French Army.

- Thales' high-tech system "evaporated" from one of the frigates that never made it to the Russian Federation

Fortunately, in 2015, the Mistral contract was cancelled by the French side after the illegal annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation. Two of the four Russian-ordered frigates that had been built were later sold to Egypt, one named Gamal Abdel Nasser and the other named Anwar Sadat. But before the contract with the Russian Federation was cancelled on 25 November 2014, French media reported that Naval Group employees reported two hard drives, a motherboard and a graphics board for radar transmissions, a high-tech system developed by the Thales group, missing from one of the frigates. Following the search, the Nantes criminal investigation department has found no trace of a break-in, but neither have the missing items. It is therefore possible that this technology was appropriated by the Russians, who thus managed to block the launch of five of the eight missiles from three French frigates in Syria in 2018.

Under these circumstances, and in light of recent information on the company MBDA Missile Systems, the Ministry of National Defence seems to be facing huge risks, from a cyber point of view and not only, regarding the purchase of military technology and equipment from one of our country's strategic partners. From the above, it seems that French companies in the field are unable to secure information on the technique and equipment built and delivered to allies, since such information ends up either on the darknet or in the hands of hackers employed by the armed forces of the Russian Federation.

Therefore, the situation of building corvettes to the capabilities, capacities and operating systems established in 2015 by Naval Group also involves a high risk as long as in the immediate vicinity the Romanian Naval Forces are in close contact with the Russian Federation Naval Forces, which in the past have worked very well with French companies: with Naval Group, Thales and MBDA Missile Systems.

Moreover, it should be analysed, in the light of recent data, whether there is any security risk, even a minimal one, regarding the purchase of Scorpene class submarines from the same French company - Naval Group, submarines which, in recent times, Vasile Dîncu, the Minister of National Defence, has often brought up for public discussion.

Who among the political decision-makers in Bucharest is taking all these risks regarding collaboration with French companies for the equipping of the Romanian Army?

Source: <https://www.bursa.ro/inzestrare-cu-bucluc-colaborarea-cu-companiile-franceze-risc-de-securitate-ridicat-pentru-armata-romana-24894746>

Turkey to raise price of Bosphorus and Dardanelles crossing fivefold

Turkey will increase the price of crossing the Bosphorus and Dardanelles by five times - in line with the rights granted by the Montreux Convention. According to Krym.Realii, Turkish newspaper Sabah reports this, citing sources. Turkey has abolished the cross-strait fee collection system introduced in 1983, the newspaper writes.

Payment is calculated in French francs at the rate of \$0.8 per franc. From 7 October, the rate will be four dollars per franc. This currency is no longer used, so Ankara accepts payment in Turkish lira.

The country now earns \$40 million a year from the passage of ships and boats through the straits. According to the newspaper, Turkey's annual income will rise to \$200 million.

The 1936 Montreux Convention is a document that restored Turkey's sovereignty over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. According to Article 19 of the convention, Turkey can close the straits to ships of countries at war.

The only exceptions are ships returning to ports of permanent basing. This rule now applies to Russian and Ukrainian ships.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193679>

The "Brahmos" (Russian-Indian) enterprise is ready to supply missiles to the Russian army

The Russian-Indian enterprise "Brahmos" is ready to supply supersonic missiles to the Russian army. That such missiles "would be very useful" for the Russian military in the context of a full-scale war against Ukraine was stated in an interview with RIA Novosti by Alexander Maksichev, co-director of the Brahmos company on the Russian side.

"We are ready to fulfill such an order. In today's conditions, Brahmos missiles would be very useful for the Russian military," Maksichev said.

The joint Russian-Indian BrahMos partnership was established in 1998. The enterprise's main project was work on a supersonic cruise missile, which was given a similar name - "BrahMos".

The first launch of the rocket took place on 12 June 2001 from a coastal launcher. The rocket is based on the P-800 Oniks (more precisely, on its export version - Yakhont) - developed by NPO Mashinostroeniya in the 1980s. The missile is capable of reaching speeds corresponding to Mach numbers from 2.5 to 2.8 (i.e. 2.5-2.8 times the speed of sound). The missile can be launched from submarines, ships, coastal installations, as well as from aircraft - e.g. Su-30MKI. The missiles were assembled by SO BrahMos Aerospace in Hyderabad and OAO PO Strela in Orenburg.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193661>

Three more Ukrainian grain ships have left Odessa's ports

On the morning of 29 August, three ships with Ukrainian agricultural products left Odessa's ports via the "grain corridor".

As reported by Ukrinform, the Turkish Ministry of Defence announced this on Twitter. "This morning three more grain ships left Ukrainian ports," the report said. It is noted that export grain shipments are continuing as planned under the control of the Joint Coordination Centre.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193662>

Britain to offer Ukraine underwater drones to neutralise Russian mines

The UK will provide Ukraine with underwater drones for coastal demining and train the Ukrainian military to use them. According to Porty Ukrainy, this is stated in the British Ministry of Defence message. §

Six autonomous mine search vehicles will be deployed to detect Russian mines in the waters off the Ukrainian coast. Three of these will be supplied from UK depots and three will be purchased from industry.

In the coming months, the Ukrainian military will undergo training in the UK to be able to detect, locate and identify mines using drones, which operate effectively in the coastal zone and at depths of up to 100 metres.

The three-week training course will be conducted by the Royal Navy's Dive and Threat Group in conjunction with the US 6th Fleet.

With extensive experience in the use of equipment, they will conduct training at sea to operate the vessels and interpret the data they send back to identify mine configurations. "This vital equipment and training will help make Ukraine's waters safe, helping to restore grain supplies to the rest of the world and supporting Ukraine's Armed Forces as they seek to protect their coasts and ports," said UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace.

The UK Ministry of Defence notes that attempts to export food continue to be hampered by sea mines left by Russian troops along Ukraine's coast.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193675>

Ukraine has about 40 requests for transport through 'grain corridor' - Kubrakov

Ukraine has about 40 requests for transporting food through the open grain corridor in the Black Sea blocked by Russia. This was said by Infrastructure Minister Oleksandr Kubrakov in an interview with European Pravda.

"We already have about 40 applications, about 700,000 tons of agricultural products have already been released from ports in Greater Odessa since the beginning of the grain initiative. Of course, we want to expand it and add other ports," Kubrakov said.

According to him, three main Ukrainian Black Sea ports are now fully operational: Chornomorsk, Odessa and Pivdenny.

So far, 27 ships have been released from them, ten were waiting for loading.

"These are the ships that have left and come in, i.e. they were not there before the start of a full-scale war," the minister clarified. He also informed that the carriers, being convinced of the effectiveness of the agreements, are increasing the number of requests for transport. "The dynamics we see is 10-15 ships per day. For example, seven ships entered our ports yesterday. Seven is already a number, in one day not bad," Kubrakov pointed out.

A total of 51 ships carrying Ukrainian agricultural products have left ports in the Odessa region since the sea blockade was lifted.

Source: <https://www.blackseanews.net/read/193666>

Shipping giant CMA CGM sees drop in global freight rates

French container line giant CMA CGM SA is seeing an overall drop in freight rates and a loosening of logistics bottlenecks in some regions as demand slows.

"What we've been seeing now for many weeks is a drop in freight rates in almost all sectors," Chief Executive Rodolphe Saade said Friday in Algiers.

"We expect this decrease to continue. I don't think we will see a sharp drop, but rather a soft landing."

The comments are in line with those of the World Trade Organization, which said this week that merchandise trade flows slowed last quarter and will likely remain weak in the second half.

This could end a turbulent period for container shippers after two years of high tariffs and capacity shortages due to pent-up consumer demand during the pandemic.

"At the peak of the Covid crisis, we had freight rates between China and Northern Europe of \$14,000" per 40-foot container, Saade said in an interview.

"Today it's around \$9,000 and dropping," Saade said but said there remain some glitches in global supply chain networks, citing persistent heavy congestion in places like the US and Europe.

"We're seeing a decrease in demand, so that's impacting a little less congestion, even though some places remain hard to manage," he said.

The Marseille-based carrier's CEO is accompanying French President Emmanuel Macron on a three-day official visit to Algeria.

CMA CGM has been operating in the country for two decades and is exploring new opportunities in ports and logistics, Saade said.

The company has come under pressure in recent months from French lawmakers who have called for an exceptional tax on record profits.

Shipper and oil producer TotalEnergies SE has responded by granting discounts on fuel and transport rates in France.

Source: <https://gcaptain.com/shipping-giant-cma-cgm-sees-softening-of-global-freight-rates/>

Ice-resistant self-propelled platform "North Pole" put into operation

According to JSC United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC), on 24 August 2022, JSC Admiralty Shipyards, which is part of it, handed over an ice-resistant research expedition

vessel to the Russian Federal Service for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Roshydromet). The North Pole powered platform is project 00903 (serial number 02404). The ship, moored at the quay, went to the Grand Harbour in St Petersburg. Here, the self-propelled ice-resistant platform will be prepared for the transition to Murmansk and beyond - to the first research expedition.

Source: <https://bmpd.livejournal.com/>